INTELLOFAX 11

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY REPORT NO. [redacted]

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Chile

CONFIDENTIAL

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SUBJECT 25X1A Comments of Communist Leader on Communist Part in Proposed December Plot

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It has been learned that Raul Barra Silva, a Communist Party leader, recently discussed rumors of Communist participation in a public disturbance program which was intended to overthrow the Chilean government on or about 23 December 1949. It is reported that Barra Silva answered questions put to him as follows:

Question: Was the Communist Party mixed up in the coup which was to take place during Christmas week?

Answer: These rumors may have had their origin in the letter written by Galo Gonzalez to the opposition parties which was mailed to certain Congressmen. When he speaks of a new government, it may be assumed that he referred to the overthrow of the present government.

Question: Then the Communist participation in this attempt for a new govern-ment would be something overt?

Answer: Of course. From the moment the Party was declared illegal and the police were unable to suppress it, it was obvious that an overthrow of the government would be advocated in all openness. This is not new. In all of the circulars and handbills of the Party in the last six months, it has been advocated that the fight must be directed toward overthrowing the government.

Question: Who is responsible for all of this propaganda?

Answer: It is now all under the management of Elias Lafferte and Salvador Ocampo, who have parliamentary immunity and are free to act. Lafferte is handling the political parties and Salvador Ocampo handles the labor organizations. Since there is no formal organization in the Party at present, things have to be done in any way possible. Formal statutes do not apply.

Question: Has the Communist Party made any agreement with some other party for the overthrow of the government?

Answer: I do not know of any. If there were an agreement, it would have to be known to the leaders since it would involve the future of the Party.

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Of course, if there is any movement for the overthrow of the government of Gonzalez Videla, I am sure the Communist Party would assist it rather than oppose it. The Party has control over a labor force large enough to be decisive in a coup d'etat, since no group or military-civilian junta could resist a coal strike, or an agitation in the north. The Party could capitalize on any disturbance, since it is the only Party which can immediately go into action like a fire brigade or a mobile police unit. When the signal of alarm is given in one section, orders will fly like arrows.

Question: Do you believe that something similar to the Frente Popular may be organized?

Answer: The Party's objective is much greater. It will seek aid from all elements, and if possible will neutralize the Catholics and nationalists. The Catholics are useful and the nationalists are dangerous. But now imperialism is trying to maneuver through the Catholic church and fortify the nationalists to create national forces which, without being politically dangerous, will pull the chestnuts out of the fire.

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